

A NEW COMBINATION IN LINUM

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A review of the Linaceae for the checklist of the vascular flora, being developed under the direction of the Biota of North America Committee, reveals that a minor nomenclatural change for one of the populations comprising the western American flax, Linum lewisii Pursh, would make uniform the treatment of the infraspecific taxa of this species and would express as well as possible at this time the relationships between them.

Like Mosquin (1971), I think that the homostylous American plants warrant recognition as a species distinct from the heterostylous Eurasian L. perenne L. As such, L. lewisii consists of three more or less well-defined populations: typical L. lewisii, blue- or rarely white-flowered plants, ranging from northern Alaska southward through the foothills and the mountains to central Mexico; var. alpicola, high alpine plants of California and Nevada, characterized by their dwarf stature and small floral parts; and var. lepagei, mostly white-flowered plants found in the vicinity of Hudson Bay and James Bay.

The complete synonymy for the three varieties, including the distinctive color forms of var. lewisii and var. lepagei, is as follows:

Linum lewisii Pursh, Fl. Am. Sept. 1:210.1814.

Var. lewisii

- L. sibiricum DC. var. lewisii (Pursh) Lindl., Bot. Reg. 14: pl. 1163.1828.
- L. perenne L. var. lewisii (Pursh) Eat. & Wright, N. Am. Bot. 302.1840.
- L. decurrens Kellogg, Proc. Calif. Acad. 3:44.1863.
- L. lyallianum Alef., Bot. Zeit. 25:251.1867.
- L. perenne L. f. albiflorum Cockerell, W. Am. Sci. 3:217.1887.
- L. lewisii Pursh f. albiflorum (Cockerell) St. John, Fl.S.E. Wash. & Adj. Ida. 244.1937.
- L. perenne L. subsp. lewisii (Pursh) Hulten, Fl. Alaska & Yuk. 7:1122.1947.

Var. alpicola Jepson, Fl. Calif. 2:398.1936.

- L. lewisii Pursh var. saxosum Maguire & Holmgren, Leafl. West. Bot. 4:265.1946.
- L. perenne L. ssp. lewisii (Pursh) Hulten var. saxosum (Maguire & Holmgren) Reveal, Rhodora 70:38.1968.

- Var. lepagei (Boivin) Rogers, comb. nov.
L. lepagei Boivin, Natur. Can. 75:219.1948.
L. perenne L. subsp. lepagei (Boivin) Lepage ex. Dut., Lep. & Dum., Contr. Arctic Inst. Cathol. Univ. 5:92.1954.
(It is not clear whether the author really accepted this combination).
L. lewisii Pursh f. lepagei (Boivin) Lepage, Natur. Can. 84: 61.1957.
L. perenne L. var. lepagei (Boivin) Boivin, Natur. Can. 93: 643.1966.
L. lewisii Pursh subsp. lepagei (Boivin) Mosquin, Can. J. Bot. 49:1379.1971.
L. perenne L. var. lepagei (Boivin) Boivin f. baldwinii Boivin, Phytologia 22:351.1972.

Reference

- Mosquin, T. 1971. Biosystematic studies in the North American species of Linum, section Adenolinum (Linaceae). Can. J. Bot. 49:1379-1388.